

REMARKS

Status of the Application

Prior to entry of the present Amendment, claims 1 and 3-12 were all the claims pending in the Application, all of which currently stand rejected. Per the present Amendment, Applicant has added new claim 13. Applicant respectfully submits that the recitations of claim 13 are fully supported throughout the Specification as filed. For example, support for the new claim can be found in the paragraph bridging pages 19 and 20 of the Specification as filed. Applicant further submits that claim 13 patentably distinguishes over the cited art.

Claims 1, 3, 5 and 7-12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,859,845 to Oniishi (hereinafter “Oniishi”), in view of U.S. Publication 2002/003781 to Kikkawa (hereinafter “Kikkawa”). Claims 4 and 6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Oniishi in view of Kikkawa, in further view of U.S. Publication 2002/006025 to Lesesky (hereinafter “Lesesky”). No further grounds of rejections or objection have been presented.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1 and 3-12 have been rejected under § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Oniishi in view of Kikkawa. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections for the following reasons.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*:

different kinds of load electrical parts, provided at a front portion of a vehicle;

electronic connectors, each electronic connector being fitted by direct connection to one kind of the load electrical parts;

...

a drive control unit, provided in the electronic connector, connected to the front electrical control unit through a sub bus line and wire harness, converting the control signal into a drive signal, and driving the load electrical parts based on the drive signal,

...

wherein the one kind of the load electrical parts is mounted to the electronic connectors.

Applicant respectfully submits that Oniishi in view of Kikkawa fails to disclose *at least* the above-recited features of claim 1.

In setting forth the rejection, the Examiner alleges that the Oniishi discloses the same structure and elements of claim 1. For example, the Examiner alleges that Oniishi discloses the recited “direct connection” through the disclosure that “connector (30) containing drive controller (311) contains multiple connectors (B1, B2, ... Bn) fitted to it that are directly coupled to the load electrical parts.” (Office Action, page 9, section 2a). The Examiner further alleges that, “Thus, it is disclosed that the electrical connector (30) containing the drive control unit (30, 311 in Fig. 15) is fitted with direct communication to at least one of the load electrical parts.” (Office Action, page 7, first full paragraph, emphasis added). Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Claim 1 recites that, “electronic connectors, each electronic connector being fitted by direct connection to one kind of the load electrical parts,” and a, “drive control unit, provided in the electronic connector, ... converting the control signal into a drive signal, and driving the load electrical parts based on the drive signal.” Accordingly, in exemplary embodiment of the invention, a part of the functions of the front electrical control unit can be shifted to the drive control unit of the electronic connector, thereby realizing the simplification and miniaturization of the front electrical control unit. Moreover, by omitting the wire harnesses, it is possible to reduce the noise caused by wiring. (*see* Specification as filed, page 4, line 20 to page 5, line 14, etc.).

Although Oniishi adopts the configuration of distributing the load controls by a plurality of load control sections 20, 30, it does not disclose an electronic connector to be connected directly and physically to the loads, and therefore fails to disclose, “the one kind of the load electrical parts is mounted to the electronic connectors.” Furthermore, as clearly depicted in FIG. 2 of Oniishi, load control section 30, the alleged connector, is clearly not mounted to the alleged load electrical parts. For example, Oniishi explicitly states that load control section 30 is connected to the loads through wireharnesses.

Further, claim 1 recites, “each electronic connector being fitted by direct connection to one kind of the load electrical parts.” That is, where the load is a lamp or lamps, an electronic connector for the lamp is provided and connected thereto. Where the load is a washer module, an electronic connector for the washer module is provided and connected thereto.

Oniishi discloses that the load control section 20 is connected to loads 21₁ to 21_n through wire harnesses, and the load control section 20 controls power of the loads 21₁ to 21_n. Similarly, load control section 30 is connected to loads 31₁ to 31_n through wire harnesses, and the load control section 30 controls power of the loads 31₁ to 31_n. Oniishi clearly teaches load control section 30 being connected to multiple types of loads as described in column 13, lines 16-67 of the reference. Furthermore, the power control of the loads connected by wire harnesses to the load control section 20 is performed by the load control section 20. If the loads are one type, it must be unnecessary to provide the load control section 20. Therefore, the loads 21₁ to 21_n includes multiple types of loads, not one type.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Oniishi fails to disclose *at least* the above recited features of claim 1. Applicant further submits Kikkawa fails to bridge these deficiencies in Oniishi. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the cited art. Applicant further submits that claims 3, 5 and 7-12 patentably distinguish over the cited art due *at least* to their dependence on claim 1, as well as their additionally recited features. Finally, Applicant submits that Lesesky fails to bridge the above described deficiencies in Oniishi and Kikkawa, and therefore claims 4 and 6 patentably distinguish over the cited art due *at least* to their dependence on claim 1, as well as their additionally recited features.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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